What Is Islamophobia?

Through its policies of racial profiling and racially targeted immigration enforcement, the state has adjudged all "Muslim looking people" to be terrorists.

   Muneer I. Ahmad, "A Rage Shared by Law"

I think it is because of the way we look and the way we dress.

   Yusor Abu-Salha

Yusor Abu-Salha was far more than the headscarf she carefully wrapped around her head every morning and removed every night. The twenty-one-year-old was a fresh college graduate, having just earned a degree in biology from North Carolina State University.[1] She had plans to attend the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry—her top-choice program—in the fall of 2015 and had begun prepping for it months before she would formally set foot in a dental school class. She wore a wide smile on her face nearly every day after ripping open the envelope that contained her letter of acceptance, and she felt absolutely fortunate about the opportunities her country granted her. She wrote, "Growing up in America has been such a blessing.

And although in some ways I do stand out, such as the hijab I wear on my head, the head covering, there are still so many ways that I feel so embedded in the fabric that is … our culture."[2]

Yusor was also a newlywed. She had just married her college sweetheart, twenty-two-year-old Deah, who, like her, loved hip-hop music and community service, and who was working toward a career in dentistry. The two were tied at the hip, pushing their close friend Omar Alnatour to call them "the most perfect couple I have ever seen."[3] Deah himself was a second-year student at the UNC School of Dentistry and had helped his wife piece together a compelling application so that she could follow in his footsteps. In fact, the young couple frequently talked about establishing their own dental clinic and one day lending their skills to help poor patients in the Middle East, as well as serving neglected patient communities at home in North Carolina.

These are dreams that young people in their early twenties often have. But anybody who knew Yusor and Deah also knew that these two possessed the drive and work ethic to convert these dreams into reality. Yusor's younger sister, nineteen-year-old Razan, who roomed with the young couple in their Chapel Hill apartment, certainly believed that her older sister and brother-in-law would one day make good on their dreams. Razan, who had an infectious sense of humor and loved watching *Animal Planet,* had dreams of her own, which included becoming an architect, something she began to work toward as a freshman at the NC State School of Design.[4] Yusor, Deah, and Razan were three young Muslim Americans with their entire lives ahead of them, with dreams not unlike those held by other young people their age.

On February 10, 2015, the dreams of these three Muslim American students were permanently deferred and violently

put to rest. Sometime before 5:00 p.m. on that day, a forty-four-year-old neighbor, Craig Hicks, executed Yusor, Razan, and Deah. The two girls were shot in the head and Deah was sprayed with bullets by Hicks after an alleged "dispute over a parking spot," several news outlets reported.[5] Yet the execution-style murder of the three students, and the blood that poured from their heads and stained their apartment carpet, evidenced that this was no parking dispute, but a hate crime—a hate crime aimed squarely at the faith of the three. "Parking disputes don't end in triple murders," my mother later told me, dismissing the weak motive that could hardly conceal the unhinged Islamophobia that triggered Hicks's actions that February afternoon. The gruesome facts, and the history of tension between Hicks and the three students, revealed that hate was at the heart of this murder. One didn't need a law degree to draw this conclusion.

Hicks's violent murder of Yusor, Razan, and Deah shook Muslim America. It spurred vigils on college campuses and at community centers, prayers at mosques nationwide, and heartfelt displays of mourning by friends, family, and complete strangers on social media. "It could've been my friends, or maybe even me," said my eighteen-year-old niece, Du'aa Hachem, then an incoming freshman at the University of Michigan–Dearborn who, like Yusor and Razan, wore the *hijab*—the headscarf many Muslim women choose to wear to express their spiritual devotion. This sentiment was hardly hers alone, but was shared by Muslim Americans across the country, particularly students and young women.

The murder of the three Muslim American students also signaled that Islamophobia was racing at a frightening new clip. The sisters' *hijab* often invited strange looks and stares from strangers. After all, North Carolina is in the heart of the South,

which becomes more "southern" when one travels beyond the relatively tolerant confines of Chapel Hill, Durham, and the broader Research Triangle area. For Hicks, Yusor's and Razan's headscarves signaled that they were Muslims—a faith routinely vilified on Fox News, one singled out as the source of "homegrown radicalization" by the Obama administration's national security program, and one brazenly slandered by the entire field of Republican presidential hopefuls vying for their party's nomination. As Yusor said to her father before she was killed, "I think it is because of the way we look and the way we dress.'"[6] In the United States today, this hatred is especially potent given the heightening degree of Islamophobia coming from the media, the state, and other sources.

Although they lived next door, Hicks did not regard Yusor, Razan, and Deah as neighbors. In fact, he did not even perceive them primarily as college students. He perceived them, rather, as outsiders, interlopers, and foreigners—above all, as enemies of the state who warranted the suspicion and scowls he routinely darted their way when they crossed paths in the hallway, the common areas, or in the parking lot—and on that Tuesday afternoon inside the Finley Forest Condominiums in Chapel Hill, he believed they deserved extra-judicial punishment in the name of patriotism. Hicks decided to take the law, and the anti-terror objectives of the state, into his hands by executing them. While the students grew accustomed to Hicks's stares and scowls, they likely could have never imagined that their hate-filled neighbor would become their reaper. However, the ideas and images Hicks consumed about Islam, terrorism, and the *hijab* on television, right next door, would mobilize his hate into unspeakable violence.

But what role did war-on-terror law and policy, founded on the narrative that Muslim identity correlates with terror

suspicion, have on the murder of these three Muslim American students? Was Hicks's fear and hatred of Islam irrational, or was it fueled by the stereotypes of the faith and its followers he regularly heard on the radio and watched on television, and, therefore, rational? Furthermore, was he a deviant actor whose horrific acts were the result of his own motives alone? Or was Hicks collaborating in the broader national project of policing, prosecuting, and punishing Muslims—the formal mission of the war on terror, that ambiguous and unconventional war authorized by counterterror laws like the USA PATRIOT Act, Countering Violent Extremism, and, two years after the triple murder, the Muslim ban enacted by President Trump?[7]

Could Hicks's murder of the three students, fondly remembered as "our three winners" by their family members and Muslim American activists, be tied to formal state policy? To what degree does a broadening and deepening body of national security, immigration, and local law enforcement policy—policy that holds Muslim identity as presumptive of terror suspicion—encourage Hicks and other hatemongers to express their *private* Islamophobia through words or slurs, violence, or votes? What are the connections between the state policies and structures tasked with policing Muslim citizens and immigrants and the acts of individuals who target, victimize, and in the case of Yusor, Razan, and Deah, murder Muslims? By advancing a new and comprehensive definition of Islamophobia, this chapter uncovers this nexus and the other salient connections that tie the official pronouncements and programs of the state to the behavior of individuals.

The media coverage following the murders at Chapel Hill profiled Hicks as an irrational actor who was not influenced by the legal structures that aimed to cast Muslims as presumptive terrorists, a characterization that aligns with the prevailing

understanding of Islamophobia as a "dislike of or prejudice against Muslims" generally exhibited by individuals.[8] However, this narrow framing not only overlooks the state's role in authorizing and emboldening the unfathomable acts (of private Islamophobia) undertaken by individuals like Craig Hicks, but it also overlooks the mutually reinforcing relationship between the state and media institutions like Fox News.

Furthermore, understandings of Islamophobia that tie it exclusively to private actors also fail to acknowledge that Islamophobia is structural. It is propagated by law and perpetuated by policy, policy that fluidly communicates damaging stereotypes and misrepresentations about Muslims to the broader polity, which has the effect of endorsing popular views and misconceptions, and at the extreme, emboldening hate and violence directed at Muslims and individuals incorrectly perceived as Muslims. Framing Islamophobia as more than merely hate held or violence inflicted by private individuals, and tying it to government structures and legal pronouncements and policies, is vital for uncovering and understanding each of its three principal dimensions. I will start with a foundational definition of Islamophobia, followed by a careful examination of these three dimensions.

A DEFINITION

This book offers a new understanding of Islamophobia, defining it as the presumption that Islam is inherently violent, alien, and unassimilable, a presumption driven by the belief that expressions of Muslim identity correlate with a propensity for terrorism.[9] Islamophobia is the modern progeny of Orientalism (analyzed in the next chapter), a worldview that casts Islam as the civilizational antithesis of the West and that is built upon the

core stereotypes and baseline distortions of Islam and Muslims embedded in American institutions and the popular imagination by Orientalist theory, narratives, and law. Core to this book is the contention that Islamophobia is not an entirely new form of bigotry, but rather a system that is squarely rooted in, tied to, and informed by the body of misrepresentations and stereotypes of Islam and Muslims shaped by Orientalism.

Underlying this definition are three dimensions of Islamophobia: private Islamophobia, structural Islamophobia, and dialectical Islamophobia, the ongoing dialogue between state and citizen that binds the private Islamophobia unleashed by hatemongers like Craig Hicks to the war-on-terror policies enacted by Presidents George W. Bush, Obama, and Trump.

Furthermore, the definition of Islamophobia advanced by this book seeks to collapse the wall between private and structural Islamophobia that perpetuates the latter as a legitimate form of Islamophobia. Current popular discourse and the political moment have cemented a broad understanding of Islamophobia as an exclusively deviant and aberrant private violence. State policy and policing targeting Muslims is viewed as entirely divorced from the private hatemongering sweeping throughout the United States today. This limited framing diminishes grassroots, political, and legal challenges to Islamophobia, which must contemplate the state's manifold role in advancing Islamophobic policies and emboldening private violence. Therefore, my definition of Islamophobia frames the state as a potent collaborator that influences and (periodically) drives the acts of individual hatemongers, or Islamophobes, making it complicit in the range of hate crimes and hate incidents targeting Muslim individuals and institutions. A complex and multidimensional form of bigotry requires an equally complex and multidimensional

conceptualization. Indeed, one cannot effectively counter or combat a system of hate without thoroughly understanding it and uncovering the myriad sources from which it originates.

It is important to recognize that Islamophobia does not exclusively rise from the right. Contrary to popular caricatures and flat media portrayals, Islamophobes are not always conservatives, far-right zealots, "lone wolf" killers, presidential hopefuls or presidents using hateful rhetoric, evangelical ideologues, or Trump voters. Moving beyond a narrow conception of Islamophobia requires dismissing these common caricatures. Islamophobes are also Democrats and liberals, libertarians and progressives, city dwellers and Ivy League graduates.

For example, liberal comedian and talk show personality Bill Maher, of HBO's *Real Time with Bill Maher,* referred to the Qur'an as "Islam's hate-filled holy book." Maher callously conflates the whole of Islam with the deviant interpretations of the faith subscribed to by terror groups such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and in front of a live audience in the heart of Los Angeles he routinely vilifies Muslims and Islam to rousing applause. With little knowledge of Islam, and panels that seldom include Muslims when discussing Islam, Maher pawns off expertise about the faith and its people on an audience that knows just as little, or even less, about Islam. Bill Maher, an Islamophobe by any measure, illustrates that a figure championed by the left can be wed to the trite stereotypes and monolithic view of Islam that drive Islamophobia. His large following indicates that he is hardly alone.

Hamid Dabashi, a professor of comparative literature at Columbia University, writes that liberal Islamophobes like Maher "talk about the 'battle of ideas' without a single citation of any living or dead Muslim theologian, philosopher, mystic, poet, artist,

or public intellectual evident in their vertiginously vacuous prose." Condemnation of Muslims is engaged without Muslims sitting across from Maher as studio guests, and it masquerades as intellectual critique without even a rudimentary understanding of the faith and its various schools of thought.[10] Certainly, ignorance of Islam feeds Islamophobia. But an intimate familiarity with the damaging tropes and flat narratives propagated by news media is a more potent source, and in the case of Maher, is passed off as adequate enough expertise to engage in a "battle of ideas" that frequently sounds more like a "clash of civilizations" (discussed in chapter 3) than informed critique.

Furthermore, it must be noted that Barack Obama, a Democratic president heralded by many as the most progressive in U.S. history, embraced counter-radicalization policing and expanded the surveillance state beyond that of the Bush administration, under the supposition that Muslim identity was presumptive of terror threat. Hillary Clinton, the 2016 Democratic nominee defeated by Trump, generally referred to Muslims with qualifiers such as "terror hating" or "peace loving," implying that the word "Muslim" alone would conjure up images of terrorism and therefore be too politically costly to utter without some kind of modifier.[11]

Islamophobia coming from the left (and center) is often more latent and harder to detect than that which emanates from the right, and particularly the far right. However, it is still there. The news media covering the (first) Muslim ban vividly illustrated this. From January 30 through February 3, 2017, cable news coverage of the immigration order featured predominantly white men weighing in on an issue that targets Muslims, with Muslims watching from the sidelines. "Aligning with the spirit of the immigration order, mainstream news media effectively excluded

Muslims from the airwaves. This was not exclusive to 'conservative' media outlets like Fox News, but even more extreme on outlets commonly perceived as liberal mediums," I wrote in an op-ed in the wake of the ban.[12]

Research by media watchdog Media Matters confirmed my observation.[13] Only seven of the ninety commentators (7.8 percent) CNN featured to discuss the ban during this five day span were Muslim analysts. MSNBC, widely perceived to be the most progressive of the three major cable news networks, only featured two Muslim analysts out of the twenty-eight (7.1 percent) invited to speak during that period. Fox News, on the other hand, had the highest proportion of Muslims on air, with five out of the fifty-eight contributors (8.6 percent) identifying as Muslims. The effective exclusion of Muslim analysts from a concern that directly impacts their communities and very lives, is not only demonstrative of latent Islamophobia, but of the corollary belief that others (overwhelmingly white men pegged as "Muslim experts") are more qualified to speak on Islam and Muslims than Muslims themselves. Islamophobia is not merely fear or animus of Muslims, but also erasure of Muslims. In the case of the Muslim ban, they were not only denied the lead on addressing concerns that directly impact their lives, but even materially barred from involvement in the discussion. Whether latent or patent, liberal or conservative, rural or urban, Islamophobia is a system carried forward by private and state actors and by the ongoing dialectic between the two.

PRIVATE ISLAMOPHOBIA

Private Islamophobia is the fear, suspicion, and violent targeting of Muslims by private actors. These actors could be individuals or institutions acting in a capacity not directly tied to the state.

Craig Hicks's murder of the three Muslim American students in Chapel Hill is a clear example of private Islamophobia. Another example is Fox News, which has built its brand in great part around demonizing Muslims, capitalizing on "scaremongering about Islam" to help solidify and even expand its share of the American television news market during an era of rising Islamophobia.[14] The Gatestone Institute in New York City, a right-wing think tank focusing on the Middle East, Muslims, and Islam's incompatibility with Western societies, is another example of a purveyor of private Islamophobia.

Private Islamophobia can target specific individuals, as in the case of the students in Chapel Hill, and it can hone in on collective communities, institutions, and even non-Muslims. For example, the wave of armed and unarmed anti-Muslim protests held across the United States in September 2015 were staged in front of, and targeted, community mosques—centers where Muslims congregate and worship, particularly on Fridays, Islam's holy day.[15] Islamophobes also vandalized, desecrated, and burned down mosques, the most salient symbols of Muslim American life, during the same year, which witnessed a horrific uptick in attacks on U.S. mosques.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported seventy-eight attacks on U.S. mosques in 2015, the highest number since the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks.[16] Many of these attacks took place in heavily concentrated Muslim neighborhoods and enclaves, indicating that the culprits were not necessarily targeting specific institutions, but rather the entire communities that surrounded them. Muslim Americans, and the faith they practice, were under attack, and the most visible representations of Islam bore the brunt of the frightening uptick in hate crimes recorded in 2015.

Incidences of private Islamophobia continued to proliferate during the following year. There were 2,213 anti-Muslim hate incidents recorded in 2016, a 57 percent increase from the preceding year.[17] In addition, the Southern Poverty Law Center found that the number of anti-Muslim hate groups rose from 34 in 2015 to 101 in 2016, becoming more common than neo-Nazi, white nationalist, and anti-LGBTQ outfits, and growing at a far faster clip.[18]

Again, mosques were frequent targets of private Islamophobia, and in 2017, an average of nine mosques were being vandalized, desecrated, or bombed per month—a frightening number that highlights private Islamophobia in the U.S. is still on a violent incline.[19] Even more frightening was the lack of attention from the mass media and, not surprisingly, the Trump administration, which is hardly an innocent bystander but rather a propagator of rhetoric and policy that incites hate and emboldens the private targeting of Muslim Americans, which proliferated by a staggering 584 percent from 2014 to 2016.[20] Individuals and families, businesses and mosques were the targets, including the Dar Al-Farooq Muslim Center in Bloomington, Minnesota, which was bombed early Sunday, August 6, 2017, only minutes before morning prayer.

Non-Muslims are also vulnerable to private Islamophobic animus and violence. Since Muslim identity is racialized as Arab or Middle Eastern, an embedded caricature of Muslims (closely examined in chapter 3) guides how private Islamophobes imagine and identify adherents of the faith.[21] A wide swath of non-Muslim groups and communities, most notably non-Muslims from South Asia, the Arab world, Middle Eastern nations, and Latinx states, and particularly Sikhs, are often profiled as Muslims and victimized by private Islamophobes. Muslim men are stereotypically perceived as brown, bearded, and turbaned—a caricature

few Muslim American men actually comport with but one that aligns with the physical appearance of a specific non-Muslim demographic, Sikh men. In America, the trouble with wearing turbans, a spiritual mandate for Sikh men, is their nexus to the ingrained stereotype of the Muslim terrorist[22] and the hatred that stereotype activates.

The murder of Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh gas station owner in Mesa, Arizona, six days after the 9/11 terror attacks is a lasting reminder of how Sikhs—a non-Muslim faith group with origins on the Indian subcontinent—are often the victims of private Islamophobia. Sodhi, who wore a turban and kept a full beard in line with his religious convictions, fit the caricature of the Muslim terrorist subscribed to by many Americans. Frank Roque, the man who killed Sodhi, was guided by this caricatured portrait and shouted, "I stand for America all the way!" after taking Sodhi's life. Sodhi, a non-Muslim, became the first victim of private Islamophobic murder in the wake of 9/11.[23]

Well after 9/11 and the violent murder of Sodhi, Sikh men continue to be routinely perceived as Muslims and targeted by private Islamophobia.[24] Arjun Sethi, a Sikh American civil rights lawyer and professor, states, "In post-9/11 America, Sikhs have become an easy target. Our articles of faith—a turban and beard—make us acutely vulnerable to profiling and bigotry, Islamophobia and hate violence. But we continue to resist and push back, alongside other communities of color, in particular Muslim Americans."[25]

This private dimension of Islamophobia dominates popular and even scholarly understandings of the term and is the form that monopolizes mainstream media framing and coverage of Islamophobia. However, if we confine our understanding of Islamophobia to the irrational actions of hatemongers like Craig

Hicks or Frank Roque, or the economic or political agendas of institutions like Fox News or the Gatestone Institute, how do we account for the laws and policies that similarly cast Muslims as unassimilable, suspicious, and potential terrorists? Are these policies part and parcel of the broader system of Islamophobia, or are they distinct and exempt from condemnation?

STRUCTURAL ISLAMOPHOBIA

Structural Islamophobia, the second dimension, is the fear and suspicion of Muslims on the part of government institutions and actors. This fear and suspicion are manifested and enforced through the enactment and advancement of laws, policy, and programming built upon the presumption that Muslim identity is associated with a national security threat. These laws, policies, and programs may be explicitly discriminatory, like the first and second Muslim bans, which explicitly restricted immigrants from Muslim-majority nations from entering the United States. Others may seem neutral, having been framed in generally applicable terms, when in practice they are disproportionately enforced against Muslim subjects and communities.

Although thought to be a novel form of bigotry against Muslims, close investigation of structural Islamophobia illustrates that it is anything but. Again, Islamophobia is the modern progeny of Orientalism, "a master discourse that positions Islam—a faith, people, and imagined geographic sphere—as the civilizational foil of the West."[26] Connecting Islamophobia to Orientalism is a vital first step toward understanding that Islamophobia is deeply entrenched, fluidly remade and reproduced, and deployed by the state to bring about intended or desired political ends.

Structural Islamophobia is manifested by historic policy and state action against Islam and Muslims, and most visibly today, by the abundant laws, policies, and programs enacted to police Muslims during the protracted war on terror. Chapter 2 examines the formative racial classifications and immigration policies that narrowly caricatured Muslims as Arab or Middle Eastern and stifled their attempts to become naturalized citizens from 1790 until 1944. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the extension and expansion of structural Islamophobia in the modern American context, examining law and policy enacted to police, prosecute, and punish Muslim immigrants and citizens on the grounds of protecting national security.

Following 9/11, law scholar Leti Volpp observed how terror attacks involving a Muslim culprit spur the immediate "redeployment of Orientalist tropes."[27] These tropes are embedded within popular representations of Muslims, such as news coverage or depictions in film.[28] But more saliently, they are embedded within the institutional memory of government agencies, including the judiciary,[29] the legislature, and the executive branch—most notably, in the Department of Homeland Security and anti-terror law enforcement during the protracted war on terror. These foundational stereotypes, which portray Islam as irreconcilable with American values and society and Muslim identity as foreign, subversive, and harboring an inherent propensity for terrorism, move state agencies to enact policies that profile and closely police Muslim citizens and immigrants. Such policies assign the presumption of guilt to Muslims at large, and in turn diminish the civil liberties of Muslim Americans.

While a number of government policies fit within the structural Islamophobia classification, the PATRIOT Act, counter-radicalization programming, and first and second Muslim bans

are four of the most vivid examples. In the aftermath of 9/11, the Bush administration established the Department of Homeland Security with the mission of not only expanding its domestic counterterror program, but also entirely overhauling and restructuring it in specific response to "Islamic extremism." Modern American national security and the counterterror state were remade to reflect the belief that Muslims pose a threat, and to reflect how that threat is imagined and exaggerated. Structural Islamophobia is not exclusive to the federal government; it is also advanced on the state and city levels. However, state and city governments typically follow in the footsteps of the federal government, as illustrated by war-on-terror policy and strategy.

President Obama ushered in the second phase of the war on terror. His administration extended the restrictive immigration policies enacted in the wake of 9/11 by President Bush (the National Security Entry and Exit Registration System, or NSE-ERS) and formally installed counter-radicalization policing in 2011, which expanded the surveillance state and "localized" state scrutiny of Muslim subjects by enabling local law enforcement to monitor "homegrown radicalization."[30] Although Obama was heralded as a progressive president who declared that "America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition," during his celebrated Cairo speech on June 4, 2009,[31] his administration expanded the surveillance of Muslims beyond the degree established by the Bush administration.

Finally, structural Islamophobia was made more transparent and brazen during the third phase of the war on terror, ushered in by the Trump administration on January 20, 2017. By issuing the executive orders on immigration, promising to enact a Muslim Registry (and to revitalize NSEERS),[32] remaking Countering Violent Extremism into the more hardline Countering

Islamic Violence, and seeking to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization—a measure that would severely cripple Muslim American civic and advocacy organizations with tenuous, imagined, or fabricated ties to the transnational political group[33]—Trump made the war-on-terror objectives of the state the most explicitly anti-Muslim they have ever been. However, the Trump administration should not be viewed as a marked departure or outlier, but rather as a more transparent and brazen step in a progression that has been, in great part, enabled by the stated war-on-terror aims and programs of the previous two administrations.

Perhaps the best way to think about structural Islamophobia is by analogizing it to structural racism. Both are cultures embedded within government institutions. Both have preexisting narratives and propagate stereotypes based on understanding a people in flat, damaging, and subhuman terms, stories that are then institutionalized at every level of public and private organizations, institutions, and agencies. These stories are manifested in seemingly benign decisions or routine functions that bring about a discriminatory end, and sometimes through actions whose explicit intention is to bring about a discriminatory end.

How do we explain the relationship between private and structural Islamophobia? How does the latter endorse or influence the actions of individuals and actors that participate in the former? What do we make of the dynamic, or dialectic, between the state and its polity with regard to authorizing and emboldening Islamophobia? And how does the fluid exchange between government structures and citizens perpetuate Islamophobia as a broad system of bigotry and violence? I explore these and additional questions next.

DIALECTICAL ISLAMOPHOBIA

The final dimension of Islamophobia is the least detectable, but it is the very thread that binds the private and structural forms together. Dialectical Islamophobia is the process by which structural Islamophobia shapes, reshapes, and endorses views or attitudes about Islam and Muslim subjects inside and outside of America's borders. State action legitimizes prevailing misconceptions, misrepresentations, and stereotypes of Islam and communicates damaging ideas through state-sponsored policy, programming, or rhetoric, which in turn emboldens private violence against Muslims (and perceived Muslims).

Islamophobia at its core is the presumption of guilt assigned to Muslims by state and private actors. But it also must be understood as a process, the one by which state policies endorse popular tropes. This ongoing process is most intense during the aftermath of terrorist attacks like the 9/11 attacks or the April 15, 2013 Boston bombings,[34] points in time when structural Islamophobic policies are typically enacted, advanced, or zealously lobbied for.

Moments of national mourning, particularly after a terror attack committed by Muslims or individuals perceived as outsiders,[35] also spark a desire to exact revenge and perpetrate violence against anybody and everybody perceived to be Muslim, or more generally, not American. This mass anger, typically enforced through acts of vigilante violence directed at innocents, is also often endorsed and emboldened by formal policy that deems Muslims to be suspicious and to be members of a faith that ties them to the terror acts. For example, four days after a suicide bombing in England's Manchester Arena on May 22, 2017, a man shouted that "Muslims should die," then lunged toward two girls, one of whom was Muslim, on a train in Portland, Oregon, with a

knife, and fatally stabbed two of the men who stepped in to defend the girls.[36] Only hours after an ISIS-inspired attack in London on June 3, 2017, a headscarved Muslim American woman, Rahma Warsame, was savagely assaulted by an Islamophobe in Ohio, leaving her with missing teeth and a broken nose and jaw.[37] These victims were a continent away from the terror incidents that drove Islamophobes to attack them.

Stories like these are all too common, particularly in the wake of terror incidents, and exhibit the Islamophobic base narrative that holds all Muslims guilty of every terror attack. Expectations that Muslims disavow or apologize for acts of terror[38] highlight this narrative. Mainstream media coverage is replete with headlines such as "Muslims Must Do More against Terrorism" and "Why Aren't Muslims Condemning ISIS?" confirming the baseless tie between terrorism and Muslim identity, and further emboldening the private backlash against any and every Muslim.

The state's rubber-stamping of widely held stereotypes of Islam and Muslims, through the enactment of surveillance programs, religious and racial profiling, restrictive immigration policies, and the war-on-terror campaign, is the cornerstone of dialectical Islamophobia. This exchange—by which citizens absorb the suspicion and demonization the state assigns to Muslims by way of (structural Islamophobic) law or state action—is an ongoing dialectic that links state policy to hate and violence unleashed by private citizens.

While Craig Hicks's murder of the three Muslim students is generally framed as a deviant act committed by one deviant actor entirely divorced from the state, dialectical Islamophobia reveals an underlying thread that connects the (seemingly) deviant actions of hatemongers like Hicks with the state's

repeated message that Muslim identity alone is grounds for suspicion that justifies vigilante action by private citizens. If the law is laden with damaging stereotypes of Islam and Muslims, and American citizens are expected and instructed to obey the law, the dialectic between the state and the citizen—and the hostility the state authorizes—is made clear.

Most of the attention devoted to Islamophobia fixates on sensational stories of private Islamophobia. Stories about "intensifying calls for the exclusion of Syrian refugees,"[39] anti-Muslim rallies spearheaded and staged by fringe militants, mosque arsons, and the spike in violence against *hijab*-clad Muslim women that took place after Trump's presidential victory[40] dominate mainstream news, social media, and even academic research. This preoccupation with sensational stories of private Islamophobia obfuscates the process by which structural Islamophobia authorizes and mobilizes private bigotry toward Muslims. Like other forms of bigotry, Islamophobia is contingent on media representations, political rhetoric, and most saliently, formal law, policy, and programming. The fluid expansion of structural Islamophobia, through the advancement of the war on terror, communicates to the broader citizenry that Islam is to be viewed with suspicion. And under a president who openly states, "I think Islam hates us,"[41] it is easy for many people to believe that Islam is utterly irreconcilable with American culture, and that those who identify as Muslims are not part of the collective "US" or "we." Structural Islamophobia marks Muslims and Muslim Americans as, at best, possible threats, and at worst, as terrorists in our midst. These state designations prompt the passions and stir the suspicion of private citizens, increasingly motivating them to take action.

In "A Rage Shared by Law," written in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks, Muneer I. Ahmad of the Yale Law School observes,

"Like the post–September 11 perpetrators, the state claims an intimate relationship with the nation.…Moreover, the state has purported to act in the names of the victims of the terrorist attacks, invoking their memory as justification for a broad range of antiterrorist policies." In this passage, Ahmad articulates one dimension of the dialectic, whereby the state—or the government—takes action against the enemy in the name of the fallen victim, on behalf of the people living in the United States, which Ahmad calls the nation. He continues, "Through its policies of racial profiling and racially targeted immigration enforcement, the state has … adjudged all 'Muslim-looking' people to be terrorists, and carried out acts of retribution against them."[42] Here, Ahmad is loosely explaining the gist of dialectical Islamophobia.

This very dialectic continues following the Paris, San Bernardino,[43] Brussels,[44] Orlando, Manchester, and London terror attacks, wherein the nation's intensifying private Islamophobia drives the Countering Violent Extremism policing programs expanded by the state. In turn, structural Islamophobic policy and state action communicate to private Islamophobes that their fear and anger toward Muslims are justified. During moments when structural Islamophobia is broadened to address (real or imagined) Muslim extremism, structural Islamophobic policies embolden the private passions of Islamophobes to partake in the national project of policing and punishing Muslims, in the name of revenge, citizenship, and patriotism—which, in the wake of terror attacks, are virtually indistinguishable.

Therefore, structural Islamophobia should also be viewed as a latent (and in the case of Trump, a patent) call to action transmitted from the state to its citizens. The state is alerting the American people to be on the lookout for suspicious Muslims, and when the time comes, to take action. Craig Hicks, after all, was

just acting on what war-on-terror policy instructed him about the threat posed by Muslims like Deah, and particularly Deah's new bride Yusor and her sister Razan, who wore "the flag of Islam" around their heads.[45] Even if they were backpack-toting, pizza-eating, wide-eyed college kids, driven by the very same aspirations held by non-Muslim students at high schools and college campuses across the country, Yusor, Razan, and Deah were ultimately Muslims, which meant that according to the highest laws of the land, they were members of an enemy bloc bent on menacing America. As Muslims, the three students gruesomely murdered in Chapel Hill were said to be part of an enemy race, a caricature of Muslims embedded within the memory of American institutions centuries before it was implanted in the mind of Craig Hicks.[46]